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PRESS ITEM FOR THE DCI

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ASSOCIATION

DAMASCUS, SYRIA, MAY 1 (REUTERS)-SYRIAN HEAD OF STATE NOUREDDIN EL-ATASSI TODAY ISSUED A DECREE REVOKING THE LICENCE GIVEN TO THE AMERICAN FRIENDS OF THE MIDDLE EAST ASSOCIATION TO OPERATE IN SYRIA.

AN EXPLANATORY NOTE SAID THAT "IT HAS BEEN ESTABLISHED BEYOND DOUBT THAT THIS ASSOCIATION IS CLOSELY LINKED TO THE U.S. CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY AND IS ONE OF THE U.S. ESPIONAGE DEPARTMENTS."

SYRIA SIGNED A TECHNICAL COOPERATION AGREEMENT WITH THE ASSOCIATION IN 1963 UNDER WHICH IT PERMITTED THE ASSOCIATION TO ESTABLISH BRANCHES IN SYRIA. TODAY'S DECREE ALSO REVOKED THE AGREEMENT.

THE ASSOCIATION, WHICH HAS OFFICES IN IRAQ, IRAN, JORDAN, MOROCCO, PAKISTAN, TUNISIA AND THE UNITED ARAB REPUBLIC AS WELL AS SYRIA, DESCRIBES ITSELF AS A PRIVATE, NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION FOUNDED IN AMERICA IN 1951 WITH A VIEW TO FURTHERING UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN THE PEOPLES OF AFRICA AND THE MIDDLE EAST AND THE U.S.

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